

Like I'm Gonna Lose You

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Summary: Percy is Sherlock's personal assistant (read: babysitter).

Hired by Mycroft (AKA The Bane of Percy's Existence), she does everything for Sherlock: cooks, cleans, gets him to his appointments, covers for him in socially awkward situations. Her secret, though, is that she doesn't only do it for the pay. She's in love with Sherlock Holmes, but he can never know.

Like I'm Gonna Lose You

They met on a Tuesday. She was just minding her own business, walking back to her small flat when, out of nowhere, something collided with her and nearly knocked the bags of groceries out of her hands. The something was a man, and she glared at his back as he rounded the building in front of her and disappeared from sight. Well, perhaps that isn't really when they \_met\_. But it was the first time she saw him, and it was the first time he completely ignored her.

They officially met one month later (to the day, but neither would realize that for some time). She had to go to NSY to give a statement and he was there, well, being himself. You see, earlier that morning she'd tried paying her rent and instead had found her landlord dead. As in D-E-A-D. The gun was lying on the floor next to him and everything. The Sergeant who'd escorted her to NSY had told her it was most likely suicide, but they needed to get her statement all the same. Then he looked at her out of the corner of his eye as if wondering why she wasn't curled up in a ball, scarred for life.

When they'd arrived, he'd escorted her up to the homicide department and left her sitting in a chair beside his desk. This gave her the perfect spot to watch some poor Detective Inspector taking the heat from a man who was \_clearly\_ disgruntled. And loud. Just as she was afraid Detective Inspector Patience-is-a-Virtue was going to break his own nose, he was pinching the bridge of it so hard, Sergeant Everyone-is-a-Suspect finally reappeared and escorted her to a different room.

Two long hours later, she was standing in the lift, watching the doors close, when an arm shot between them and the doors bounced back open. She wasn't sure how she felt when she saw it was Mr. It's-a-suicide-I-can't-believe-you-morons-are-police. He looked tired. The doors were barely closed when he looked over at her and opened his mouth.

"So, why did you move to London if you didn't already have a job?"

She slowly looked up at him, her arms crossed over her chest, eyes wide, trying to decide if she should go right back upstairs and report him for being a stalker. But something in his eyes told her that he wasn't asking because he wanted to know the answer. So she answered him.

"Because I needed a change," she said carefully, and it was truth enough. He looked at her skeptically, but eventually gave a curt nod, as if accepting the answer. They stayed silent until they were about to leave the building, and then he spoke up again.

"I'd like to speak to you about what you saw," he said, and she looked up at him, wishing she could read his mind. But, again, something in his eyes told her that he wasn't interested in her, just the information. So she went with him to the coffee shop across the street and drank a large macchiato while he sipped at an Earl Grey and listened intently. He didn't even take notes. She got about three quarters of the way through her story when his expression suddenly changed to one of realization and triumph. She could tell he was about to bolt out of the shop when she reached out and grabbed his sleeve.

"Who the hell are you?" she asked, her brows coming together as he looked at her.

"I'm Sherlock Holmes."

And he was gone.

\* \* \*

><p>There was a man in her flat when she got home. She panicked and grabbed the baseball bat she kept by the door, raising it over her head.<p>

"That's very American, isn't it?" he mused, and she glared.

"Who the hell are you and why are you in my flat?" she demanded, but the man only chuckled.

"Put the bat down, Persephone. I'm not here to hurt you; I'm here to offer you a job."

The first thing that came to her mind was that this guy was the British version of Don Corleone. She glanced around the flat. The mystery man was (as far as she could tell) alone, so she figured what the heck and had a seat on the couch. She kept her bat balanced across her lap. Just in case.

"Don't call me that. It's Percy." She grimaced at the thought of her full name, leaning forward, her elbows resting on her knees. "So, what job are you offering me?" she asked, raising an eyebrow dubiously.

British Corleone cleared his throat and crossed his legs. "I'd like to hire you as a personal assistant." When Percy opened her mouth to tell him that breaking into her flat was the last way to get her to work for him, he continued. "For my brother. I believe you met today after you were interrogated by New Scotland Yard's 'finest'."

"Interviewed," she corrected, and her glare returned. He grinned a little. "Of course," he replied, and Percy wanted to punch him in his smug face. "Starting pay is £2,000 a week. Any additional expenses will also be covered. Interested?"

Percy stared. "You're gonna pay me two thousand quid a week to be your brother's personal assistant?" she asked, stupefied. Mystery man nodded, picking at a thread sticking out of the arm of the chair he was sitting in.

"Yes."

"And what exactly do I have to do for that kind of paycheck? I mean no one gets paid that much to keep a guy's calendar straight and answer his phone," Percy inquired, half expecting this guy to tell her his brother has a thing for BDSM and wants her to wear nothing but a leather thong.

"Sherlock has special needs. I have yet to find someone who can handle the work load for more than a few days."

Yeap. Leather thong. Probably handcuffs.

"Look, Mr.

I-broke-into-some-chick's-apartment-to-see-if-she-wants-to-be-my-brother's-sex-slave, I'm perfectly happy where I am. Thanks for the offer, but I'm good. Don't let the door hit your pervy ass on the way out." Percy stood, but he didn't.

"Persephone, I came to you because I know you" he started, but she rounded on him.

"You have no idea who I am, and I'd like you to leave," she growled, gripping the bat tightly again.

"Persephone Nyx Harlow. Born 19 August 1980 in New York City. Mother is a nurse, father was a pilot who served in the United States Air Force. You moved to California shortly before the birth of your brother in 1983. Your father was deployed to Kuwait during the Gulf War in November of 1990, and was killed when his plane was shot down on 29 January 1991, just one month before the war ended. You were a straight-A student up until you graduated high school in 1998. You then went on to attend the University of California and majored in Music Education. You became engaged to one Jack Whitelaw your senior year, but you broke it off two months before the wedding. You taught at Saint Francis of Assisi Elementary school in Los Angeles up until six months ago, when you moved to London. Why haven't you started teaching again, Persephone?"

Percy didn't answer. She only stared.

"How did youâ€“What â€“ Who the hell \_are\_ you?" she stammered.

"My name is Mycroft Holmes," mystery man finally clarified, standing. "And I believe I am your new employer. You start tomorrow. I'll contact you with the details later on this evening. Have a nice night."

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Two Years Later<strong>

"Sherlock, you need to find a flatmate."

There's a crash, a sizzle and a loud swear. Percy looks up from her perch on the corner of Sherlock's desk, where she's been pouring over all of Sherlock's bills for the last hour.

"\_Why\_ would I want a flatmate?" he calls from the kitchen, and Percy rolls her eyes when she hears the microscope click into place.

"Oh, I don't know," she starts sarcastically, waving the electric bill in her hand around dramatically. "Maybe so you can keep from living in a cardboard box?" Then, under her breath she mutters "and maybe so you can pay your assistant."

Percy picks up the water bill and groans. Apparently Sherlock was conducting another see-how-much-water-we-can-waste experiment last month. There's a crash, then Sherlock comes flying out of a kitchen holding a spoon out.

"Taste this," he says, holding said spoon in front of Percy's mouth. She raises an eyebrow at him.

"What is it?" she asks, grabbing his wrist so he can't just shove it in her mouth. He did that once with pureed sardines and chicken livers and that's why Percy has trust issues. She sniffs it and it smells like honey. And something else, but she can't quite tell what.

"Just taste it," he says. Percy rolls her eyes but dips the tip of her tongue in carefully. She was right; it was honey mixed withâ€“| withâ€“|

"What's in the honey, Sherlock?" Percy demands, and Sherlock grins.

"Ground termites," he replies. Percy drops the bill in her hand and starts pawing at her tongue. Sherlock tisks. "Oh, come on, Percy. It won't kill you."

"That's what you said that time you fed me horse tranquilizers just to see what would happen, Sherlock!" she accuses, hopping off the desk and running to the kitchen sink. "I was asleep for two full days after that!"

Percy cups her hands and lets some water pool in, using it to rinse her mouth. She hears Sherlock walk back into the kitchen and sit down

at the table. "Most peaceful two days of my life since I met you," he muses, and when Percy turns to glare at him he's peering through the microscope.

Deciding to give up on the whole you-don't-poison-your-assistant lecture, Percy dries her hand on a dish towel before walking over and dropping into the other chair. She watches Sherlock for a while, and he pointedly ignores her as he starts scrawling in a notebook. Finally he looks up, narrowing his eyes at her.

"What?"

Percy raises her eyebrows as she pulls her knees up to her chest.

"Should I put an ad up for a roommate? Or do you want to find one on your own?"

Sherlock sniffs and shuffles some petri dishes around. Percy knows this is his way of avoiding the subject. "You're such a child," Percy groans. Sherlock looks at her petulantly, then crosses his arms over his chest. Yeap. He's totally a giant man-child.

"Well, if I need a flatmate so bad why don't weâ€" he starts, but Percy cuts him off.

"No."

"But-

"Not happening."

"See, weâ€"

"Never."

"Couldn't youâ€"

"\_No.\_"

"Why not?"

Percy stares at him.

"Because I don't get paid enough to be around you twenty-four seven," she answers, and he glares at her. They sit in silence, battling each other through looks alone. Finally, Sherlock surrenders.

"Fine," he sighs, defeated.

Percy smirks, resisting the urge to thrust a fist in the air and break out her victory dance. Winning an argument with Sherlock Holmes without him throwing a temper-tantrum that would put any three year old to shame is quite the accomplishment.

"So," she says, rising. "You should start asking around. I'm sure there's someone desperate enough to live with you." Sherlock sends a smoldering glare her way, but Percy ignores it as she starts searching for something to make for dinner. Not that Sherlock will eat it.

By eleven that night, Percy's returned the calls of two dozen potential clients, Sherlock's called two dozen potential cases boring and has punctuated that point by burning a hole through the middle finger of one of Percy's favorite gloves. So at 11:03 PM, just when Percy's contemplating washing all of Sherlock's petri dishes out of spite, she walks into the living room to see an all too familiar sight.

You see, Sherlock sleeps wherever he happens to be when he decides he wants to sleep. It doesn't really matter where that is: Sitting on the tube at two in the morning, in the back of a taxi after solving a two week long case, propped up on his elbows at the kitchen table while a Bunson burner flickers away a mere two inches from his highly flammable shirt sleeve. He even fell asleep at a crime scene once (Lestrade still brings it up). And, no matter how inconvenient his position is, Percy can never find it in her to wake him. That cab ride? It lasted four hours just because Percy knew that in those two weeks Sherlock had only slept one full night.

So when Percy walks into the living room and sees Sherlock sprawled across the couch, his arm hanging down, fingers barely touching the rim of a mug of tea, she sighs. Then she gets mad at him for making her unable to stay mad at him. Then, of course, he snuffles in his sleep and rolls over on his side and any remaining hint of anger melts away.

Percy crosses the room, grabbing Sherlock's favorite old sheet off of his desk (why the hell is it on his desk?). She stoops and picks up the mug, moving it to the coffee table before draping the sheet over his body. It doesn't take her long to scribble Sherlock a note on a discarded envelope that she'd be back in the morning and she really will wash all of his petri dishes if he doesn't have at least three potential roommates in mind by the time she arrives. She tapes the note to his microscope, turns off all of the lights, and heads for the door.

As always, Percy takes one final look at the sleeping lump on the couch and sighs, thinking back to Sherlock's persistence that she be his flatmate. She knows why he would suggest that, "â€|\_because it's the logical thing to do"\_. She hopes that the excuse she gave him is enough for now. Because when it's not, when she has to tell him the truth, she'll lose him. Probably forever.

Because "I love you" is just not something you say to Sherlock Holmes.

\* \* \*

><p>"Sherlock, I asked you for a list of potential flatmates, not the first three people that happened to pop into your mind."<p>

Percy stares at Sherlock, completely exasperated. He doesn't even look up at her, just continues changing the strings on his violin. Annoyed, Percy balls up the paper towel he'd scrawled \_Lestrade, Percy, Kermit the Frog \_on and heaves it as hard as she can at his head. He ignores it as it flutters pathetically to his feet.

"I really don't see anything wrong with the suggestions I made. They all seem to be plausible candidates."

Percy snorts. "Yeah. I'll go call Brian Henson and find out if Kermit wants a two or three bedroom," she quips. Sherlock looks up at her and nods. "Good. That will help me narrow down the search."

Percy groans and throws her hands up in the air. "Fine! Get kicked out of your flat! Then maybe I can work for someone who actually needs me!" she exclaims, storming into the kitchen. She ignores the flutter in her chest when she hears Sherlock mutter "But I need you."

"Prove it," she counters under her breath. She looks around the kitchen and sighs; every surface is covered in some component of an experiment. Deciding that she really does deserve a raise (even if her boss can't afford to give her one), Percy pulls out her secret stash of cleaning supplies she keeps in the oven and starts cleaning.

She's finished the counters and is half way through her second cabinet when Sherlock's mobile rings. Seeing as it isn't in his hand, he won't answer it, so Percy yanks off her gloves and sprints into the living room. She crosses her fingers that it's a client, but according to the caller ID, it's St. Barts' Morgue, which means Molly has another corpse for Sherlock to experiment on.

"Hey, Molly," Percy says, rolling her eyes at Sherlock's back.

"Oh. Hello, Percy." Molly sounds disappointed, and Percy feels guilty. At least she's figured out that Sherlock will only ever be on the receiving end of unrequited love. Poor Molly has been pining over Sherlock since they met.

"Is Sherlock in?" Molly asks, and, as if he heard her, Sherlock looks up and shakes his head. "He's busy," Percy lies, and she suspects Molly knows he's not.

"Well, can you let him know that there's a subject here for him?" Molly asks. Percy nods. "Sure. We'll be there in an hour."

\* \* \*

><p>Percy hates the morgue. It's not the dead people, or the cold, or even the smell of chemicals that hangs around the place. Percy hates to admit it, even to herself, but she hates the morgue because it makes her feel awkward to be around Molly.<p>

Molly Hooper and Percy met three weeks after Percy was officially hired as Sherlock's assistant. From the beginning Molly was sweet, soft spoken, and polite. She always offers Percy a cup of tea, and she is quick to ask about how Percy is. But at the same time she makes Percy feel off, guilty almost. You see, Molly is head over heels for Sherlock. She watches him with a sort of awe, an unadulterated sort of lust rolling off of her in waves. And it isn't all physical lust (although Percy knows that's part of it). Molly looks at Sherlock the way a young student looks at an attractive, brilliant professor. She looks at him as if he can do no wrong, as if all of his experience and expertise must make him perfect, and all of his little faults are just some twisted trick of the perception of those who are beneath him.

And Molly assumed Sherlock was oblivious to her infatuation. Percy can tell in her smile each time Sherlock brushes her off. It's a sort of sad smile, but there's still hope in her eyes. And that hope is what makes Percy feel awkward. Percy knows that Sherlock is completely aware of Molly's feelings for him, and he completely ignores them. To Sherlock, any feeling other than that of boredom and curiosity are frivolous and are promptly ignored. In shorter terms, Sherlock is about as sexual as a potato.

Percy kind of wishes he wasn't as she watches him brandish his favorite riding crop, but she's an old pro at hiding her sudden excitement, unlike Molly. Percy stays completely still as Sherlock swings the riding crop down and it meets the corpse's flesh, and Molly flinches. Percy glances at her as the strikes down in the morgue continue, and she sees the doctor is biting her lip and grimacing, but there's a hint of a smile there. Percy wishes she could be so transparent.

"I'm gonna head over to the lab and sort some samples for Sherlock," Percy says, dragging her eyes away from said detective and looking over at Molly, who was practically drooling all over the floor.

"Alright. I'll go let him know," she replies, and before Percy leaves she sees Molly pull out what looks like a tube of lipstick. If only lipstick was the key to winning the affections of Sherlock Holmes.

The walk to the lab is short, and when Percy gets there she focuses solely on getting the lab ready for Hurricane Sherlock to blow in. Unfortunately Percy's skills in this area are finely honed and it only takes her a few minutes, leaving her to wallow in her thoughts until Sherlock arrives.

Not for the first time, Percy wonders why she's fallen in love with him. He doesn't have any attributes she'd normally look for in a man. He isn't manly; in fact, his love of his hair rivals a beauty queen's and he gets particularly pissy if his cuticles get too ragged. As far as conversation goes, Sherlock only says what's on his mind and is awful at small talk. He doesn't listen well; once Percy wound up with the flu so bad she couldn't get out of bed and when she called Sherlock to let him know she wouldn't be in, he completely ignored her and started going off about how he needed her to go to Heathrow to pick up a shipment of rare Chinese crickets. He can't keep himself entertained for very long; within an hour of Percy calling him that day he picked her lock and practically destroyed her kitchen. Altogether, Sherlock is a giant child who needs taking care of practically 24/7. But yet, somehow, his petulance is cute and his stoic silence is somehow relaxing and when Sherlock opens his big mouth the most important thing Percy hears is just how brilliant he is and&#160;

"What are you \_doing\_?"

Percy comes to herself just in time to realize she's been spinning on one of the lab chairs. She grabs the table to stop herself but the room keeps spinning.

"I was, uh&#160;" she tries to reply, but she can't focus on anything.



It's annoying.

"Where are my slides?" Sherlock demands, setting down his coat and standing over Percy. He looks pointedly between her and the microscope, clearly wanting her to give him the stool. She rolls her eyes as she stands, grabbing the tray of slides and handing it to him.

The next 45 minutes are spent in relative silence, only broken by the clink of slides being exchanged and Percy turning the pages of 50 Shades of Grey. (Sherlock kept telling her it's stupid to read it, and she sort of agrees but, hey. Who has time to date when they're in love with their socially awkward boss who overworks them? It's the most action she's gotten in two years.)

Percy's in the middle of reading a passage about a sexy dream with a riding crop (that she imagines is very similar to Sherlock's, cue eyebrow wiggle) when the door opens and she nearly throws the book across the room. Then she sees that it's Mike Stamford and she smiles.

"'Lo Percy," he says, and Percy nods at him. She's mildly surprised when a man follows him in. He looks much too young for the cane he's using. They make eye contact and Percy smiles, sliding the book into her bag as nonchalantly as possible. She hopes neither of them saw the title.

"Bit different from my day," Mike's colleague says, walking further into the lab and looking around. Percy's fairly certain she knows why Mike's brought him into this particular lab since just this morning Sherlock had explained the need for a flatmate. "\_I honestly don't know anyone who'd want me for a flat mate, but since Percy refuses to live with me, I guess I'll have to find someone desperate enough." \_Those were his words.

"Mike, can I borrow your phone? There's no signal on mine."

Percy paid the bill this morning with the last of the money from Sherlock's last case. He's curious about this potential flat mate.

Mike asks what's wrong with the landline, and Percy knows his answer. "I prefer to text." Percy suddenly thinks about Sherlock's hands and has to cross her legs. Tightly.

It only takes a moment's pause after Mike apologizes that he left his in his coat for the stranger to offer his. Percy straightens, hopeful.

Niceties are exchanged, and Mike introduces him as John Watson. Percy is honestly starting to think that there's actually a chance that they mayâ€|

"Afghanistan or Iraq?"

Percy has to resist the urge to dramatically groan and slap a hand to her forehead. Every. Single. Time. She's starting to think of duct taping his mouth shut in public.

John looks at Percy, who's probably got a look of extreme pain on her

face, then says "Sorry?" and turns to Sherlock.

"Which was it, Afghanistan or Iraq?"

John looks back between Percy, who still feels like she's going through a horribly painful dental procedure, and Mike, who's looking somehow both sheepish and happy at the same time. John sighs and looks down. He's impressed, she can tell.

"Afghanistan. Sorry, how did you know?"

As if she knew that this was the worst moment possible, Molly walks in carrying a mug. "Ah, Molly! Coffee, thank you." He takes it from her, then looks puzzled. If Percy was closer she would have slapped a hand over his mouth before he could ask about her lipstick.

"It wasn't working for me," she said, clearly embarrassed.

"Really? I thought it was a big improvement. Your mouth's too small now."

Percy physically face-palmed this time, shaking her head.

\_Idiot.\_

"Okay," Molly replied weakly, then almost shuffled out of the room. Before she was even gone, Sherlock started speaking again. "How do you feel about the violin?"

"Sorry, what?" John replied, clearly confused.

"I play the violin when I'm thinking and sometimes I don't talk for days on end. Would that bother you? Potential flat mates should know the worst about each other."

"Oh, you- you told him about me?"

"Not a word," replied Mike, looking away from the vial in his hand momentarily.

"Then who said anything about flat mates?"

Sherlock turned and grabbed his coat. "I did. I told Mike this morning that I must be a difficult man to find a flat mate for. Now here he is, just after lunch with an old friend clearly just home from military service in Afghanistan. Wasn't a difficult leap."

Sherlock walked over to Percy and laid her own coat across her lap before reaching around her and grabbing his phone. One hand went instinctively to her waist and she breathed him in. He smelled of cigarettes and coffee.

"How did you know about Afghanistan?" John asked as Percy stood and shrugged on her coat. Sherlock always seemed to be in a rush, even when he had just solved a case. Especially then.

Sherlock ignored him, instead replying with "Got my eye on a nice little place in Central London. Together we ought to be able to afford it. We'll meet there tomorrow evening, 7:00. Sorry, got to dash. I think I left my riding crop in the mortuary."

Sherlock is almost to the door when John turns and practically demands "Is that it?"

Percy pauses, her hand on the straps of her bag, to watch John. Maybe it wouldn't work out, after all. "Is that what?" Sherlock responds, turning away from the door and looking at John.

"We've only just met, and we're going to go look at a flat?"

Sherlock looks at Percy, who tries not to look too disappointed. "Problem?" He's looking at John now, who glances at Percy again. She wonders if he's wondering who she is.

He turns back to Sherlock and leans heavier on his cane. "We don't know a thing about each other. I don't know where we're meeting, I don't even know your name."

Percy bites her lip at watches Sherlock nervously, knowing that this is that make-it-or-break-it moment.

"I know you're an Army doctor. And you've been invalided home from Afghanistan. I know you've got a brother who's worried about you, but you won't go to him for help 'cause you don't approve of him, possibly because he's an alcoholic, and more likely because he recently walked out on his wife. And I know your therapist thinks your limp's psychosomatic, quite correctly, I'm afraid. That's enough to be going on, don't you think?"

Sherlock walks back to the door and opens it, then leans back and looks at John. "The name's Sherlock Holmes and the address is 221B Baker Street." He turns to Mike and wishes him a short "Afternoon" before walking out the door.

John turns and looks at Percy expectantly. "Yeah, he's always like that," she says, hiking her bag up higher on her shoulder and pulling her hair from under her coat. As she walks by Mike she kisses his cheek, then stops when she gets to John.

"I know he's a bit abrasive at first, but will you at least give him a chance?" she asks, trying not to sound too needy. John looks closely at her, as if evaluating her. He finally nods, and Percy smiles. She's about to walk away when she gets the urge to say something to him.

"Look, I know our militaries have a complicated history. But, thank you. For your service, I mean," she offers, then presses a kiss to his prickly cheek. It's completely out of character for her to do that with someone she doesn't know, but what's done is done and she walks out of the lab with a warm face. Sherlock is waiting at the end of the hall and he sniffs at her when she gets to him.

The lift doors open and he sends her a sideways glance. "Happy, now?" he asks petulantly. Percy smiles as the doors close.

"You've no idea," she grins.

End

file.